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NO. 15 - 1978

ISSUE NO. 181

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

- PRIVATE CAR RAIL TRAVEL
- SAVING THE RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR

FROM: P. O. Box 9007
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First Class

The Roar of the Four

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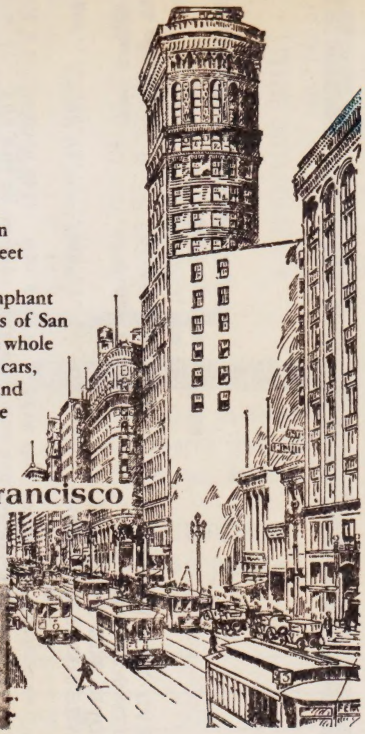

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BOOKS

Paul ("The Great Railway Bazaar") Theroux will have his latest rail journey book ready for readers next year. Entitled "The Old Patagonian Express", it will cover a 10,000-mile trip thru Latin America. The author left his home in Medford, MA (B&M) and traveled to Patagonia, at the very tip of South America. He recently commented that only Argentina has a rail system up to European standards and that trains are not used all that much in South America.

And for those interested in the Boston & Maine's involvement in commercial air travel, it is urged that they get a 1969 book, "Adventures of a Yellowbird", that is still available at the 1969 price of $7.50 from the author, Robert Mudge, 43 Country Club Road, Peabody, MA 01960. The book covers the B&M/MEC/CV airline involvement in great detail before continuing on with the history of the successor to the B&M operation, Northeast Airlines, carrying the story thru the 35th anniversary of the carrier, shortly before merger into Delta. An excellent look at an often unknown phase from New England railroad history. --Pete Roehm.

LETTERS

I am sorry that Mr. Mason (RTN #178) finds my letter (RTN #176) derogatory toward wage earners. I assume that he, as a reader of RTN, shares with me a desire to see the passenger train survive and prosper. I wish he had overcome his hurt feelings and spent more time telling how the railway workers and their unions can aid our cause. I feel I paid workers the ultimate compliment in suggesting that experiments be conducted with crews running trains from start to finish and being given much wider responsibility and decision-making power than they now enjoy. To address another point raised by Mr. Mason, crew members on these trains would work in shifts. There would be no danger of an engineer being asked to stay at the throttle for days at a time, as Mr. Mason implies that I suggest.

Whether or not this idea would work, I still feel that increased employee productivity is essential to the survival of passenger service. Sometimes poor management notwithstanding, labor costs are the largest component of passenger train operation. I have been on many trains where in the few hours between crew changes, conductors and trainmen slept or chatted after spending a half-hour collecting and counting tickets. Yet bathrooms and windows on some of these trains were filthy, lunch counters unmanned, etc. As the owner-operator of a small business, I find it difficult to understand a worker who can only perform one narrow function and refuses to pitch in if something outside his job category needs attention. While some of this division of labor made sense in a bygone era of thousands of well-patronized daily passenger trains, it creates an unbearable burden on the skeletal passenger services of today.

Passenger trains today operate in an increasingly hostile political climate of skepticism toward federal expenditures which seem wasteful. When our opponents read a news report concerning Amtrak (too often a derailment) and it comes out that there were 50 passengers and 12 crewmembers aboard (to be changed every few hours) this is not good for our cause.

I challenge Mr. Mason and others who work on the railroads to come up with some creative ideas on work rule reform, etc. Certainly you have more at stake in this than I do. I hope that in responding you will avoid narrow local situations and address yourself to wider issues and changes that you believe would help the passenger train survive.

I am afraid that if the spiraling costs of passenger operation cannot be brought down, most of us who enjoy riding long distance trains will find the choices limited to high-density corridors and occasional railfan-oriented excursions on longer runs.

Philip N. Klopp
Easton, Pennsylvania

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ON THE COVER

A small citizen of Glenwood Springs, Colorado trudges home from school thru eight inches of new snow on Tuesday, Dec 20, 1977 just east of the Denver and Rio Grande Western rail station, while at his left D&RGW train 18, the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, prepares to depart for Denver. In the left background is the western entrance to the famous Glenwood Canyon, threatened by major Interstate freeway construction. Also threatened is a major portion of the domeliner's route, between Salt Lake City and Grand Junction, as the railroad has applied for permission to drop that portion effective Jan 31, 1979 (see news item last issue). In this issue we present more information and comment on the topic of this proposed abandonment. Photo from Kodachrome transparency by Glenn Lee.

WHITE HOUSE BUDGET PROPOSAL WOULD KILL AMTRAK NATIONAL SYSTEM

The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on Dec 4 released its proposal for the Amtrak operating subsidy for fiscal year 1980 (which begins in Oct 1979). The amount proposed by OMB head James McIntyre is $456 million. This figure is $100 million lower than the amount for Amtrak requested by the Department of Transportation, which hopes to eliminate a number of Amtrak routes. Amtrak's own request is for $665 million, the amount Amtrak says it needs in order to continue the present system in FY 1980 (in the present fiscal year $600 million was budgeted). Thus the OMB is expecting a 31.4% cut in Amtrak's operating funds from the amount Amtrak says it needs in order to maintain a system like the present one. In addition, OMB expects that Amtrak must pay labor protection costs for workers laid off in a route cutback, from its operating budget, reducing it still more. The DOT had assumed that labor protection payments would be funded separately. It is estimated that if the OMB figure were to prevail--if President Carter or Congress do not reverse it--Amtrak would be reduced to a system like Scenario B in the May 1978 DOT proposal, or corridors only and perhaps a few long distance routes. DOT Secretary Adams was to meet with McIntyre on Dec 6 to attempt to persuade him to restore the DOT's budget request.

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SOUTHERN CRESCENT IN DERAILMENT DISASTER

In the worst U.S. passenger train disaster since the derailment of the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS in 1971, the northbound SOUTHERN CRESCENT, Southern Railway train 2, derailed at 5:40am on Sunday, Dec 3 near Elma VA in a rural area about halfway between Charlottesville and Lynchburg. Preliminary investigations by federal safety officials found that the train may have been speeding at 80mph on a 45mph speed limit curve. Engineer J. D. Smith of Alexandria told investigators that he had been preoccupied with a mechanical failure--an electric short circuit that was causing a loss of power. There were 65 passengers and 12 crew aboard the train, and six people were killed and at least 60 injured. Two of the dead were identified as crewmen--flagman Howard L. Jackson of Alexandria, and Lewis Price of Atlanta. Price was the chef who has been featured in recent SR advertisments that described his home-style cooking. About 62 passengers were treated at hospitals, and two days after the crash 18 remained hospitalized, with 5 in critical condition. The 8-car train was pulled by 4 locomotives. The first locomotive did not derail, but the rest of the train did, except for the last car, apparently a dorm car. Some of the cars and engines went over a 40-foot embankment to the left. The first 4 cars were most heavily damaged, with the diner and sleeper-lounge being virtually demolished. The diner fell on top of the fourth locomotive down the embankment. RTN reader Ben Cornelius, an Amtrak employee, was riding the train and assisted the injured. Some of the injuries were evidently caused by broken glass windows. The train was running from Atlanta to Washington, apparently carrying no thru Amtrak cars that day. The CITY OF NEW ORLEANS derailment in 1971 killed 12, and 45 died in a collision of two Chicago commuter trains in 1972.

AMTRAK READY TO TAKE OVER SOUTHERN CRESCENT

At the Amtrak Board meeting on Dec 13 corporation directors will be asked to approve an agreement with Southern Railway to join Amtrak and allow the Amtrak takeover of the Washington-Atlanta-New Orleans SOUTHERN CRESCENT. The railway recently petitioned the ICC to drop the train, but it was ordered to continue running. It is believed that the agreement, which is expected to be approved, calls for a Feb 1 takeover, with the train being run daily between New York and New Orleans. The entire train including diner would run from New York to Atlanta, with some cars being cut off there. It is believed that an Amtrak crewbase for SR employees will be opened in Atlanta. Amtrak directors rejected two previous proposed agreements with SR, and the present one is reportedly more favorable to Amtrak. Details of the agreement will not be available until after Dec 13.

ROCK ISLAND TRAINS GIVEN EXTENSION

The Interstate Commerce Commission has granted an extension until mid-February for the Rock Island's passenger runs, at the urging of rail unions. Meanwhile, the Illinois DOT will cease its subsidy of the service on Dec 30, indicating that it has reached an agreement in principle with Amtrak to take over the Chicago-Peoria runs. Previously the ICC was allowing the trains to be discontinued on Nov 18 or 19.

GASOLINE SHORTAGE RUMORS SCARE NATION

Pointing up the nation's underlying jitteriness about possible fuel shortages, a combination of political unrest in Iran, Shell Oil's announcement that its shortage of unleaded gasoline would require rationing to dealers, the OPEC's coming price rise of probably 5-10% for petroleum, and President Carter's statement that he would seek to deregulate gasoline prices in mid-January, combined to create a nationwide air of concern about gasoline usage this month.

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

	JUL	AUG	SEP
Metroliners	126,970	138,394	140,580
N.E. Corr. Conventional	408,097	421,910	382,302
New Haven-Springfield	23,035	23,729	22,143
NY-Philadelphia	184,097	197,485	187,559
Phila-Harrisburg	72,155	77,529	73,520
NY-Harrisburg	16,630	18,316	15,606
NY-Buffalo/Detroit	51,151	54,423	43,058
Chicago-St. Louis	15,772	16,736	11,236
Chicago-Milwaukee	24,773	26,642	19,020
Chicago-Detroit	36,509	38,766	28,519
Chicago-Carbondale	11,565	11,610	10,187
Chicago-Quincy	6,935	6,958	5,943
Los Angeles-San Diego	83,000	97,763	56,857
Seattle-Portland	8,853	10,819	7,128
Seattle-Vancouver	7,829	9,880	5,020
Washington-Cincinnati	6,812	6,821	3,817
Washington-Martinsburg	21,108	22,007	16,173
Oakland-Bakersfield	7,858	8,240	4,224
NY-Montreal	11,708	12,166	8,390
Chicago-Port Huron	8,424	9,494	6,169
Chicago-Dubuque	5,388	6,361	2,808
St. Paul-Duluth	9,677	11,663	5,297
Washington-Montreal	33,988	33,914	26,107
NY-Florida	81,301	83,264	39,446
Chicago-NY/Washington	24,791	26,382	15,752
Chicago-Cincinnati-Wash	13,048	13,142	6,503
Kansas City-NY/Washington	20,449	23,088	11,019
Chicago-Seattle (north)	20,398	24,378	11,659
Chicago-Seattle (south)	21,965	23,746	12,284
Chicago-San Francisco	26,054	28,220	15,521
Chicago-Los Angeles	30,445	31,235	16,677
Chicago-Houston	24,706	23,650	12,177
Chicago-New Orleans	21,262	21,971	13,781
Chicago-Florida	13,650	13,281	5,995
Chicago-Laredo	15,134	16,011	6,597
Los Angeles-New Orleans	10,290	9,973	5,349
Los Angeles-Seattle	46,659	55,181	32,665
Chicago-NY/Boston	26,931	30,492	21,007
Boston-Newport News	53,657	54,322	44,692
NY-Savannah	44,069	40,944	30,491
Seattle-Salt Lake City	13,054	14,350	8,388
Boston-Tri-State	3,349	1,596	1,195
Special Trains	12	0	0

Previous Amtrak ridership figures appeared in issue #178. An Amtrak spokesman said that 1978 has been a "dismal" year for ridership. There are many reasons for this, and none of them suggests that the public doesn't want trains. One of the biggest factors is all the adverse publicity associated with the DOT announcement in May that it wants to reduce the Amtrak system. This amounts to telling the public not to ride trains. For example, even a newsman with a large Ohio newspaper was puzzled by a recent Amtrak notice that the LAKE SHORE LIMITED would have a schedule change; he thought the train had already been discontinued (and it wasn't even one of the proposed cutback routes in the DOT plan!). Another factor is Amtrak's own cutback of service: in summer 1977 there were two Chicago-Seattle daily trains, while in summer 1978 there was only one train daily (running different routes on alternate days). Consists have been regularly reduced, resulting in capacity lower than needs. The Chicago-Denver run had 18 cars in summer of 1974, 16 in 1976, 14 and sometimes 15 in 1978. But in each of those years riders were turned away at peak periods. Cutting train size automatically cuts ridership. Why were consists reduced? Amtrak says it was done because some cars were diverted to new routes, some cars were scrapped, and fewer commuter cars were available to lease in the East due to older ones being scrapped.

(Continued on page 20)

Systemwide ridership totals: Jul: 1,725,058; Aug: 1,759,852; Sep: 1,424,861

RAIL CANADA

ESQUIMALT AND NANAIMO passenger service has been saved. Service on the CP Rail subsidiary between Victoria and Courtenay, B.C. will continue for a 5-year period, according to a Canadian Transport Commission ruling issued after mid-November hearings. CP can apply for discontinuance again in 5 years, but VIA actually should take the train over and the 5-year period becomes academic. During public hearings in Victoria, VIA Chairman J. Frank Roberts said that he'd like to see the service continued to see if it could become part of VIA's national network. This statement was totally unexpected, and CP then announced that in view of VIA's attitude CP was withdrawing from the case. The CTC then put its own experts on the stand. The CTC figures showed that no passenger train in Canada makes money, but the E&N lost less, with a ratio of costs over revenue of 2.7. (In comparison, Ottawa-Montreal had a 3.8 ratio, and Calgary-Edmonton posted 5.0. Last year the E&N ratio was 9.3 and the year before it was 11.2.)

DESPITE THE TAKEOVER of CP Rail's CANADIAN service by VIA, we find CP Air in mid-November still advertising a "Banff Ski Train Vacation" package with rail travel on the CANADIAN from Vancouver to Banff and 6 nights at the Banff Springs Hotel (see ad artwork at left).

VIA WILL EMPHASIZE, evidently, the CANADIAN Vancouver-Toronto transcon runs, with the CANADIAN now up to 12 cars and the SUPER CONTINENTAL down to about nine. The failure of VIA to operate thru cars from one route to the other at Winnipeg should discourage coach patronage, and sleeper capacity is down, which should also adversely affect patronage. Passengers from Thunder Bay to Ottawa and Montreal, who enjoyed thru-car service on the CANADIAN, must now endure a charter bus 20 miles from Sudbury to Capreol to complete their journeys. Passenger proponents say the present "fallback" situation is better than losing the SUPER CONTINENTAL between Winnipeg and Capreol/Sudbury, but clearly the change will not help stimulate passenger traffic.

BRITISH COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT has finally released the report of the McKenzie Royal Commission, which was studying the financial plight of the provincially-owned B.C. Railway. Major recommendations of the report include:

1) Try to sell the BCR to CN; if that can't be done, make it a truly autonomous crown corporation with no political influence on the Board of Directors.
2) Abandon the Dease Lake and Dawson Creek lines.
3) Discontinue passenger service, LCL, and piggyback.
4) If BCR's fortunes don't improve, abandon everything south of Williams Lake, all the way to North Vancouver.

The Provincial Government is under no obligation to implement any part of the report.

REGINA-SASKATOON-PRINCE ALBERT Railiner service no longer makes connections for Edmonton, due to VIA's rescheduling. Transport 2000 is concerned with this problem, as it may lead to discontinuance of the service; the SUPER CONTINENTAL was the main source of passenger traffic for the railiner. Transport 2000 plans this winter to devote efforts to preparing a report on this for the CTC.

CP RAIL HAS ANNOUNCED schedules for "Princess Patricia's" 1979 season of Alaska cruising. There will be 18 sailings from Vancouver May 15-Sep 28 inclusive. Departure times and ports of call duplicate those of the 1978 season, which was to have been the last until CP's change of plans.

CP'S STAINLESS CANADIAN cars went to VIA for about $60,000 each, rather than the railroad's asking price of $250,000 each.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

MASS TRANSIT USERS in Massachusetts will get 10% discounts on their car insurance if they have transit passes for at least 11 months of 1979. The plan by the Massachusetts Insurance Commission was pushed by the MBTA, transit authority in the Boston area. The MBTA said that transit riders have been "unwittingly subsidizing" the insurance payments of automobile commuters.

A RAIL SUBWAY to link San Francisco and Oakland airports has been proposed by by Robert Batinovich, president of the California Public Utilities Commission. Altho the transbay line would cost at least $1 billion to build, it would be cheaper than a new airport, soon to be needed due to air traffic growth. The Oakland airport is under-utilized and the S.F. airport over-used, and the rail line, joining BART's Coliseum station, would effectively make the two a single airport.

TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY ADAMS on Nov 9 proposed the establishment of a new Surface Transportation Administration by consolidating the existing Federal Highway and Urban Mass Transportation Administrations into a single agency.

THE ORANGE LINE of Washington DC's Metro system, which opened Nov 20, is getting "rave reviews", according to Washington newspapers. Bus routes to coordinate with the new transit line did not shift until Dec 4, but even before that, patronage was reported high. The new Metrorail line runs to Northeast Washington and Prince George's County. One Maryland-subsidized commuter train stops at Landover and Cheverly, now served by Metro. If Metro patronage pulls commuters from the train, it will eliminate the two stops, thus speeding up its schedule by 5 minutes. The new 7.5-mile line runs on elevated tracks to New Carrollton station, served by a low-fee parking lot.

HARSH WINTER PLANS have been made by transportation agencies in the East after two severe winters and another forecast to come. The Long Island Rail Road, criticized for its winter-induced breakdowns last year, is taking steps to keep in operation. Its new president, Francis Gabreski, has received new jet-powered snow blowers, and the railroad has even hired a meteorological consultant to assist it.

BOSTON WILL RETURN 35 of its new Boeing-Vertol light rail vehicles to the manufacturer for repair, the MBTA announced Dec 6. San Francisco now has 5 of the streetcars for preliminary tests, with its full order of 100 scheduled by August. The San Francisco cars, four years behind schedule, are "Modification Three" models which have profited from Boston's tests with the early design.

SAN DIEGO EXPECTS to sign a contract early in 1979 to purchase the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway from SP. A streetcar line from downtown to San Ysidro at the Mexican border is expected to be running by early 1982, and freight runs are planned between San Diego and El Cajon.

THE BUDD COMPANY bid a lower-than-expected price for 300 transit cars for the Chicago Transit Authority in mid-November.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"At 35,000 feet, those purple mountains lose a lot of their majesty. That high up, you don't see America. You see the clouds that cover America. Travel Amtrak, though, and we'll give you down-to-earth travel at down-to-earth prices."
--From current Amtrak newspaper ad.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"The Rohn Corporation of California produced the BART system of the San Francisco Bay Area and the new subway in Washington, D.C."
--Seymour Melman in New York Times Magazine, Nov 19.
(That's wishful thinking.)

SUPERTRAIN 'ROUND THE BEND

by Bill Kiley

The most flamboyant, extravagant, expensive set ever built for a television program is sitting quietly on a huge Hollywood sound stage--ready to roll into American homes with the premiere of NBC-TV's new "Supertrain" series.

One of the major stars of the new show is Supertrain itself; an ultra-modern passenger train which will race between Los Angeles and New York as its passengers enjoy such outlandish features as a swimming pool, book store, gymnasium--and a disco!

Visitors to the stages are awed by the giant silver train, which appears to be ready to leap out of the tunnel in Grand Central Station. Ned Parsons, the man who designed Supertrain and oversaw its construction, is still punchy from the demands of the frantic project. "It was late in July when I was asked to start thinking about a new show that NBC-TV wanted. I was told to start making some plans for a show about the most fantastic, modern train in history."

Parsons, a quiet man who started in the movie business in 1953, and has since served as art director on such films as "Night Moves" and "Capone", began a crash program of researching trains. As Art Production Designer on the new show, he knew that any train problems would fall into his lap. "I visited libraries for miles around, reading about trains and checking designs. I also sent for material from around the world. I learned that the most modern trains operating today are in Japan and Canada, and I asked for details of those trains."

He tried to figure out how the show could be done using only miniature trains, or how to do it by "dolling up" a present-day real train--but rejected both ideas. "Our train was going to be bigger, better, faster and more luxurious than anything existing in today's world. In other words, if we wanted a Supertrain, we were going to have to build one!"

Parsons and his illustrators drew up plans for Supertrain. "I took ideas from the best trains in the world, and then went far, far beyond them." He presented his plans, and was given a "Go" order. But he hadn't planned to "Go" quite that quickly. "Up to that point the project had been intriguing, but when I realized that we were actually going to build Supertrain, and that it had to be finished in time for filming in December, I almost died. The magnitude of the plan, and that horrible deadline, were frightening."

Starting in early September, Parsons assembled a crew of 100 of the top set-construction men in Hollywood--and he put them to work on a schedule that will hold a record for years. Split into two shifts, of 50 each, the crew worked 12-hour shifts, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week--straight thru to completion! The roars of saws, hammers, and dozens of exotic tools poured out of the stages for four straight months.

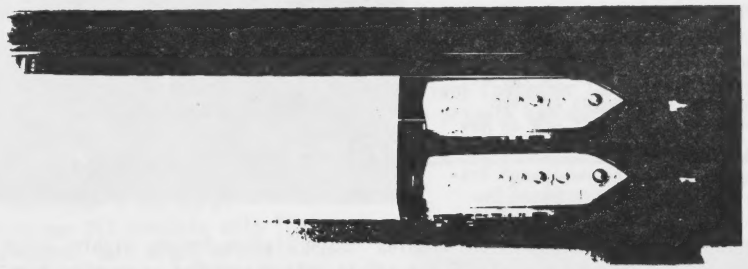
"I moved a trailer onto the lot and literally lived right next to the set for the full period," says Parsons. "The turnover was unbelieveable. We were paying men well over $1000 a week, but even that kind of money couldn't keep the same crew working week after week. I had many, many men come to me and just say that they'd had it. They had to go home and rest, or spend time with their families. It was frantic. We asked a lot out of those men--and we got a lot. The final result was everything we had hoped for."

The "final result" is Supertrain--an extraordinary, breath-taking giant of a train which consists of an atom-powered locomotive and nine of the most modern, fascinating and grand railroad cars ever imagined. What other train contains the very latest in sleeping and dining facilities while also offering a swimming pool, gymnasium, doctor's office, pharmacy, book store, steam room, boutique, beauty salon, recreation-game room--and a disco?

Strolling thru the fictional Supertrain, with its giant two-level coaches measuring 64 feet long, 26 feet wide and 22 feet high, you would start in the massive locomotive with its atomic power plant and enough dials, switches, flashing lights and television screens to confuse the most proficient passenger-jet pilot. The first coach contains the plush crew's quarters on the bottom level, and an extravagant "V.I.P." for executive parties on the second level.

The second coach has the doctor's office and a baggage area on the first level, and a very special "Presidential Suite" on the upper level. The next car has a day coach area on the bottom and the pharmacy and book store on the upper level. Number four has a day coach downstairs and a boutique and men's store on the top. Car five contains a sleeping area below and a barber shop and beauty salon above. The following car contains a recreation room, complete with ping pong and shuffle board on the upper level, above another sleeper area. That one is followed by another sleeper which has a full gymnasium, complete with steam room, on the upper level. Then comes a car with a plush dining area on one level and a huge disco-bar on the lower level. The last car contains a 22x14 foot swimming pool and a sun deck! Supertrain, which travels across country at speeds nearing 200mph, may contain a few other special cars in the near future.

RTN has learned that the information reported earlier that Supertrain would run on a double pair of railroad tracks is erroneous--actually the fictional train runs on an extra-wide track. The idea for a double-track train was developed by RTN reader James W. Kennedy of Chicago, whose article "The case for the double track train" was published in Trains magazine in Mar 1976. Below is a photo taken by Mr. Kennedy of a model of his proposed train, using two engines on adjoining tracks and wide cars that span both tracks. Mr. Kennedy says he is "pleased that the proposition will get such wide publicity thru TV, and doubtless glamour thru Hollywood."



Supertrain is housed on three big movie sound stages at MGM, where the NBC production is being filmed. The heart of the set is stage 27, which contains the huge locomotive and two giant coaches, seen at a loading platform in Grand Central Station in New York City. The set fills one of the largest stages in Hollywood, measuring 130x237 feet, with an 80-foot ceiling. Stage 27 was the only one big enough to be used during the recent filming of the latest version of "King Kong." The other sections of the train are housed on two other stages.

If the train will never leave the sound stages, how will the viewers see it racing across country? Thru the art of the "process" screens. The "Supertrain" company mounted nine motion picture cameras, at various heights and levels, on a real train and filmed miles of beautiful color scenery as the train traveled from Los Angeles to Seattle (see complete story in RTN #179). "We have fantastic shots of all kinds of scenery," says Parsons, "from beaches and oceans to rivers, forests and cities."

On the stages a massive screen is set up outside the train windows. The camera is inside the train, photographing the actors and actresses as they tell the story, and thru the windows behind them the viewers will see the countryside

rolling by, just as if the train were indeed zooming from coast to coast.

For the occasional shots which will show the full train in motion, Parsons and his crew have created a radio-controlled miniature version of Supertrain. Built at 1½" scale, the miniature stand just under 3 feet high and is complete in every detail, including its own set of tracks which will allow it to run wherever it is needed. Each miniature car is kept in its own "coffin" container which is loaded aboard a special truck taking it to various locations.

"I never liked to see movies or TV shows which used miniatures," says Parsons. "They were always too easy to spot. But I think we have whipped that problem with the Supertrain miniature. The curse of the miniature is that it's too small, too light and too shiny. They always look like toy cars, boats, trains or whatever. But this one is a darned big miniature, and it looks fantastic. We are going to film it outdoors under real daylight. We have the train roll by in the foreground, and in the background we can see real trees or the real ocean, or whatever we want. You'll swear you're watching a real train rolling thru real country."

Ned Parsons' babies are already at work. The two-hour "World Premiere" movie which will serve as the pilot for the series is now in production. The series will be broadcast on NBC-TV on Wednesdays (8-9pm NYT) later.

(Bill Kiley works with NBC Studios in Burbank, Calif. The 2-hour pilot show is now scheduled to be televised on Jan 29, 1979.)

ZEPHYR DISCO DELUXE

by Paul Rayton

The first ZEPHYR in the history of Los Angeles arrived promptly on time at 9pm on Nov 25. Not a train at all but a happening in the Hollywood tradition, the "Zephyr Disco Deluxe" was a giant disco party staged in several areas of Los Angeles' Union Station for one night. About 1000 people paid $28 apiece for the affair that was billed as running "non-stop till dawn." The main dance and show area was in the old Fred Harvey Restaurant which hasn't been open to the public since the restaurant closed in 1964. Lavish electronics for stunning video and laser imagery were employed to dazzle the eyes as well as the ears. With 25,000 RMS watts of sound power, the excitement was heard (and felt) all over the station, and patrons of the final SAN DIEGAN found they had much more than usual to watch while awaiting their train. The sponsors had also arranged with Amtrak to use the large patio area just south of the main waiting room.

Primarily staged for the trendy Hollywood crowd, the disco carried the train motif, and the now-historic rail station was still very much a part of the evening, with even a small tram-style train pulled by a "steam engine" (motorized, on rubber wheels) on which one could ride thru the other revelers. A second dancing area was set up outside in the colonnaded archway between the former restaurant and the present side entrance to the ticket room.

Your reporter left at 2:15am, but things were still going strong, and reports were that everything shut down at 6:30am, and they still wanted more! The promoters, encouraged by the response, are hoping to stage another event in L.A. and are trying to work out details of similar parties in other U.S. stations.

PRIVATE CAR

Across the U.S. and Canada by private railroad car

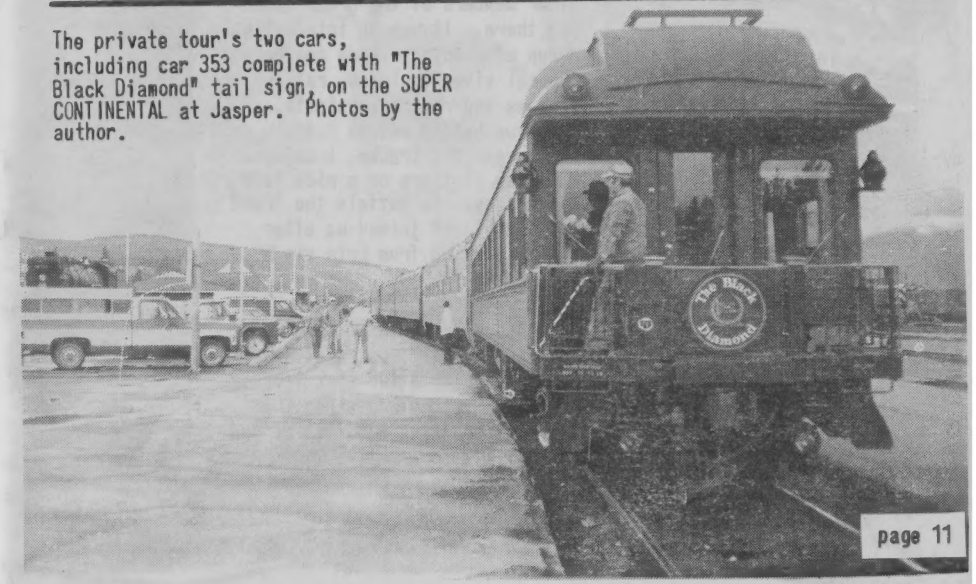
by Kenneth A. Maylath

Besides coach and sleeper class (with the slumbercoach variation) in U.S. rail travel, there exists a third class of travel available in certain cases to the general public fortunate enough to have the necessary information and the considerable fare involved for what might be termed ultra first class--travel by private car.

Many private car trips are closed to the general public--charter trips, directors specials, cars operated by private companies or wealthy individuals. In other cases the public is invited aboard to share the not inconsiderable cost ($1.50 per mile basically on Amtrak at this time, plus terminal and switching costs) of operation.

Because of the sell-off of equipment by the railroads and more recently by Amtrak, there are more private cars around than one might imagine. They have their own organization and newsletter. And note that Railway Passenger Car Annual decided to issue a separate edition this year to cover the private car sector.

I traveled this ultra first class way in late summer to reach the National Railway



The private tour's two cars, including car 353 complete with "The Black Diamond" tail sign, on the SUPER CONTINENTAL at Jasper. Photos by the author.

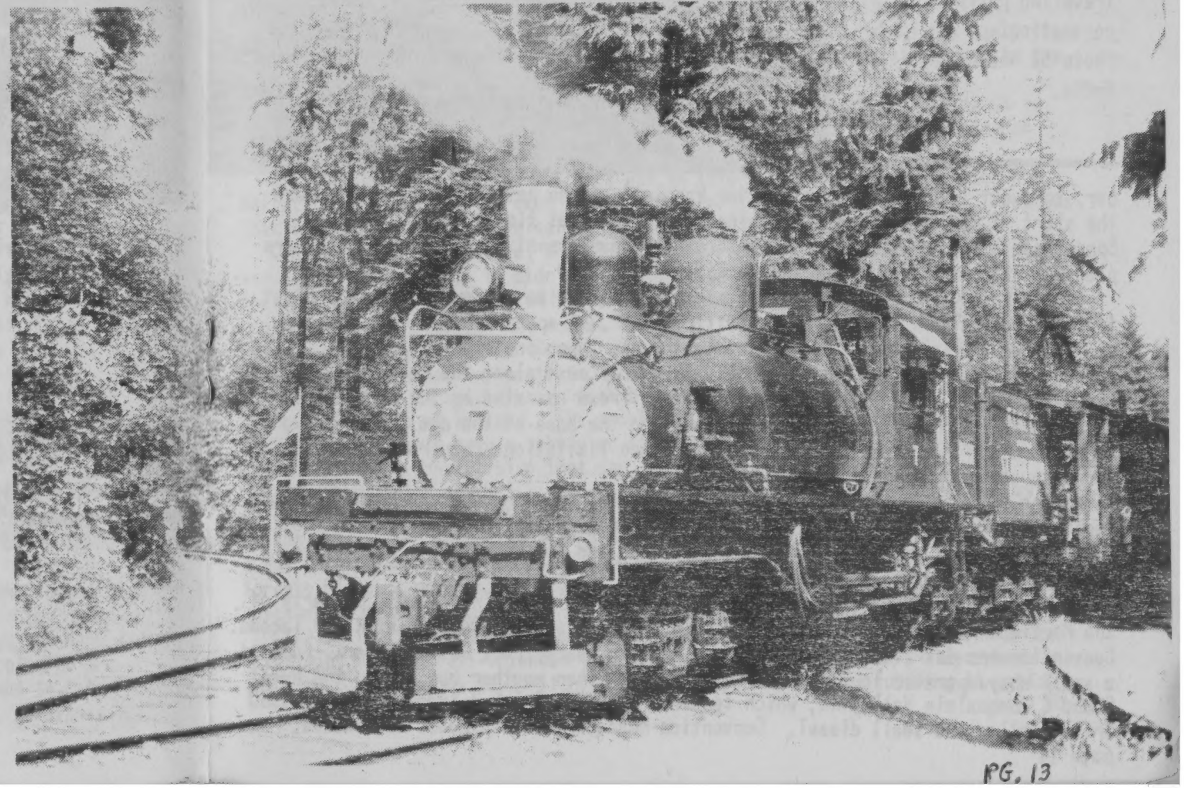
Historical Society convention in the Northwest--a two-car trip known as "Northwest Passage." Not only would the cars provide cross-country accommodations, but they also could be used as hotel space during the convention which was being held in three different cities for the first time. Many meals were included as well. Up to 28 persons could be accommodated at a given time, but it was not necessary to travel the entire distance. A few rode only a day or so.

Cars for the trip were #353, an ex-Lehigh Valley office car, and the "Pend Oreille River", a lightweight Pullman car. The 353 was built in 1916 by Pullman for the LV at the princely cost of $33,000. It remained with that railroad until the LV flag fell to Conrail in 1976. It was brought to 30th Street, Philadelphia where it sat unused until bought by Lehigh Black Diamond Ltd, a rail enthusiasts group headed by Dick Horstmann of Syracuse. The car is now based in that upstate New York city. "Pend Oreille River" went into service in 1950 on the EMPIRE BUILDER, was sold to Burlington in the early 1960s, retired in 1968 and donated to the Lake Shore Chapter of NRHS, an Erie PA group which has collected a considerable number of cars. The Chapter did some heavy rebuilding on the bedroom-roomette-section car, including installing a shower. At first glance it can be mistaken for an Amtrak car because it was given Amtrak colors during the days when the corporation insisted on that. The car retains its Tuscan red LV dress and lettering. Its vintage appearance complete with open platform and specially-made tail sign attracted attention everywhere.

It was with much anticipation that I traveled from Baltimore to New York, then to Syracuse via the still-conventionally equipped NIAGARA RAINBOW, where I got my first look at the 353 and greeted other members of the group boarding there. It was an interesting group of people of wide age range, several wives included, rail employees and rail enthusiasts.

As we headed off to Buffalo on the former NYC tracks, I enjoyed the rear platform on a nice late summer day. In Buffalo the "Pend Oreille River" joined us after having arrived from Erie via a freight train.

My sleeping accommodations were an upper berth in the "Pend Oreille River". Lest that seem a bit much for a two-week journey, note that berths are wider than beds in roomettes and that it had a handy little upper berth window.



Private car tourists looked into the streetcars of busy downtown Toronto (above) and rode behind shay no. 7 at Port Defiance Park, Tacoma, Washington (right).

After a comfortable sleep we were in Cleveland at the rear of the LAKE SHORE LIMITED--after a layover in Buffalo from 6pm to the middle of the night. Some slow orders remain on the Conrail track from Cleveland to Chicago, but we moved along in good shape, tho a bit late, and went thru a thunderstorm near the Ohio-Indiana border.

On our mid-afternoon Chicago arrival, most passengers vacated the cars while they were taken to the former Penn Central yard for servicing and a check of some minor problems. Problems, surprises, misunderstandings, changes are all part of the game; you don't just ring up Amtrak or the railroads and quickly arrange everything. It helped that there were a couple of experienced volunteer mechanical people along--but some things are beyond the scope of their knowledge and equipment.

And the mechanical problems were beyond the ability of the yard to solve quickly--meaning it was late evening before the cars were spotted at Union Station for the night. Then there was some difficulty in finding and setting up adequate power sources. In the morning there was an unscheduled trip to the Milwaukee Road yard north of Union Station for more battle with the problems. At last everything seemed in order after a couple of hours to wander around the facilities before we were hooked to the rear of the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA and backed into the station.

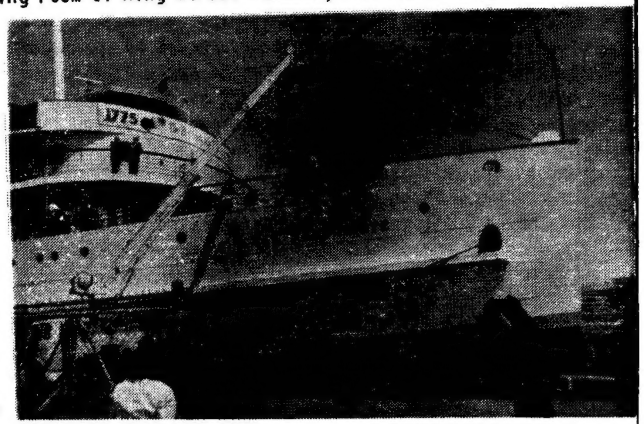
Goodbye Chicago and Westward Ho! For the next two days the NORTH COAST was our home as we moved toward Seattle. A

pleasant day followed as we wound across Wisconsin on the improved but still bumpy Milwaukee Road track. We got our first look at the new Twin Cities station after dark--a bit late--so we were able to watch the arrival of the southbound Duluth-to-Chicago NORTH STAR.

The next morning was clear and bright as we paralleled the Yellowstone River into Montana. During the afternoon servicing stop in Livingston, the 353's generators got a drink of fuel by pre-arrangement--one of those many details that must be handled on a private car journey. Since we were still two hours late, we passed the eastbound NORTH COAST just out of Livingston. The train was complete with BN private car on the rear--a car of much more recent vintage than the 353.

The late afternoon-early evening run thru the mountains was a delight on the crowded rear platform. Dusk fell as we arrived in Butte. We'd pick up a little time here, then lose some there. That had a distinct advantage because it meant that Cascade Tunnel was reached not in the pre-dawn darkness but after sunup. Almost everyone took advantage of the situation to watch and photograph.

A cool run along the shores of Puget Sound between Everett and Seattle, and a Seattle arrival only 80 minutes down thanks to padding in the schedule. Our cars were spotted near the waiting room of King Street Station, next to a BN private



A ride between Seattle and Victoria on the mini-cruise ship "Princess Marguerite" was a feature of the traveling railfan convention. Photo by Message Media.

car, to await the 5:30pm departure for Portland on the Amfleet MOUNT RAINIER and the start of the NRHS convention. There was plenty of time to check out the Space Needle, waterfront and Pioneer Square redevelopment area in one of the more pleasant cities of the nation.

The trip to Portland went without a hitch--an on-time performance on the first trip behind Amfleet for the "Pend Oreille River". A special home-built adaptor was pressed into service for coupling to the new lower profile equipment.

Convention activities got underway with a trip east along the Columbia River to The Dalles Dam, which features a mile-long railroad operated by the Corps of Engineers, taking visitors from the parking area to the base of the dam. Some traveled to or from The Dalles on the PIONEER, but space limitations required bus travel for most conventioneers.

A long but interesting day followed, with a bus hop to the steam-powered Oregon Pacific & Eastern south of Cottage Grove. Our return was followed by chartered runs behind steam and diesel on the unique Portland Zoo RR and by a salmon barbecue.

Next morning our two cars, joined by the bedroom lounge "Mt. Hood", property of the Portland NRHS Chapter, headed north on the rear of the MOUNT RAINIER for Tacoma. Conventioneers detrained there for a bus ride to nearby Fort Defiance park, home of a small shay-operated logging railroad exhibit. Then another bus hop to the Puget Sound & Snoqualmie Valley RR, which features a 1920's 2-6-6-2 logging engine, 1930 Brill trolley and small diesel. Convention headquarters now moved to Seattle.

On Sunday most boarded the "Princess Marguerite" for Victoria and then to Vancouver, with the day concluding at the Hotel Vancouver with the annual convention banquet. On Monday the weather was far from ideal for the start of the convention highlight for many--steam on the British Columbia Railway. From North Vancouver to Squamish extra cars for the NRHS were combined with the BCR's regular tourist run, and the normal power for the train, the Royal Hudson, was supplemented by British Columbia's "other" steam engine, 2-8-0 #3716. From Squamish up the hill to Pemberton, thru spectacular scenery, the 3716 handled the convention special cars by itself. Unfortunately, rain and fog obscured the scenery much of the time.

The NRHS first traveling convention at an end, many returned to the U.S. via the PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL Tuesday morning. The 353 and "Pend Oreille River" were parked at CN's Vancouver station awaiting an evening departure east on the SUPER CONTINENTAL after moving north on Sunday evening's PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL. The private cars brought up the rear of a 20-car SUPER CONTINENTAL that night, crowded with end-of-summer travelers.

The first morning out of our 4-night trip to Toronto is a scenery highlight in the heart of the Rockies. The weatherman failed to cooperate this time, tho, and fog and drizzle obscured the dramatic peaks. But skies were clearing by our afternoon arrival in Jasper. A nearly on-time arrival in Edmonton that evening gave me the chance to check the downtown station of the new LRV line a few blocks from the CN station, but not enough time for a ride.

Morning two found us out of Saskatoon in the midst of the vast plains of Western Canada. The weather now was perfect. It was a relatively routine day--frequent meets, some track work, nearly on-time performance on the SUPER's leisurely schedule. The sun was low in the sky as we eased into Winnipeg for servicing.

The sun rose on morning three on yet another new scene--the forested wilderness of Western Ontario. Assorted delays threw us more than 2 hours behind schedule by the time we clicked across the Algoma Central crossing at Oba. It was midnight as we pulled into Capreol for the split of the Toronto and Montreal sections.

Toronto: morning four, almost an hour late, but still the relatively early time of 8:25. We had a full 24 hours to investigate everything from streetcars to the CN tower. For me it was the subway and GO Transit.

I left the group now to return to my daily grind a day earlier, taking CN to Niagara Falls, overnighting in Buffalo, and crossing New York State via Amtrak Turboliner to New York, thence down the Corridor and home.

Still to come for the private cars was an interesting operation to reach U.S. soil. The obvious way to reach Buffalo from Toronto is the former TH&B. Problems that cropped up here are typical of those facing the private car operator.

Contacted well in advance, CP held off on a reply in the belief that VIA might assume responsibility. It didn't. As trip time approached it was assumed that the cars would move as part of the daily Toronto-Buffalo train--with conventional equipment substituted for the normal RDC cars. No, said CP, that wasn't possible because of an agreement with Conrail--whose track is used to reach Buffalo--that only RDCs can be used on the train. And they, of course, couldn't pull two more cars. Solution? A special move with a locomotive and the cars to the end of the former TH&B track at Welland. The problem didn't end there because Amtrak's NIAGARA RAINBOW doesn't have a scheduled stop there. Fortunately, Amtrak was persuaded to make a special stop that day, and Northwest Passage was concluded.

While such trips are not a frequently scheduled occurrence, they are not as rare as one might think. Well-known car operator George Pins from New York was on the road at the same time with a 3-car party. His cars went east on the SUPER a day before our departure from Vancouver, and the morning of our arrival in Toronto his cars were being switched to the rear of a CN Niagara Falls run for a quick round trip.

Call it the land equivalent of the ocean cruise. Call it an almost guaranteed great time for the rail-oriented traveler. Call it what you will, if you have the time and the means to do it, you'll probably look forward to doing it again.

SAVING THE RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR

Rail supporters who wish to protest the D&RGW's petition to drop the western portion of its RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR have until Jan 15, 1979 to get letters of protest to the Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington DC. Between Jan 15 and 31 the ICC will decide whether to okay the railroad's petition or to extend service while it holds hearings on the petition.

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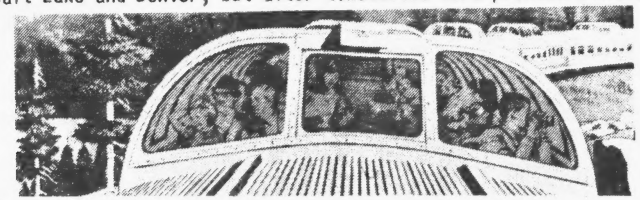

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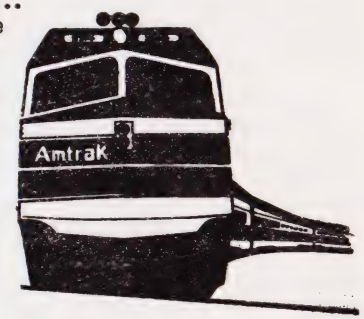
"SELF-INFLICTED SETBACKS to President Carter's efforts to halt inflation and conserve energy will result" said the National Association of RR Passengers in a Dec 6 announcement, if the Carter Administration's efforts to drastically cut back rail passenger service succeed. NARP President Orren Beaty, in communications to OMB Director McIntyre and Secretary of Transportation Adams, said that the OMB-planned cuts (see news item, page 3) for fiscal year 1980 would force Amtrak to stop serving several important corridor markets and virtaully all long-distance routes. Beaty pointed out that rail and bus alternatives to wasteful auto and air travel must be improved and expanded to reduce inflation-causing oil imports and the need for costly new highway construction. He urged development of new rail-bus terminals and said that a rail-and-bus network would be far more effective in getting people out of their cars than would a bus-only system. He pointed out that the cuts would disrupt the Amtrak route planning process and force discontinuance of trains in the face of overwhelmingly pro-service testimony given at ICC hearings this past summer.....



RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE is a great advantage for suburban dwellers and a strong selling point for real estate served by rail lines, as witness ads by a Fullerton CA real estate developer who prints the current SAN DIEGAN schedule in his ads, which are headed "Live in the country, commute to L.A. on Amtrak." The little Amtrak train shown here appears in the ads in Southern California papers...

FIRST TWO F40 engines received by Boston's MBTA have been named for two well-known rail transportation figures. Engines 1000 and 1001 were so dedicated on Nov 21. Engine 1000 was named for Henry Hersey, a dedicated rail passenger advocate who is Chairman of the Board of Selectmen for the town of Needham. Engine 1001 was named for James McGrath, recently deceased, an employee of the B&A and successor lines since 1939, and passenger conductor since 1953 on the Framingham line where he was very popular among passengers. The MBTA's first new Pullman-built coach, #301, which arrived early in November, was also featured in the ceremony which included Governor Dukakis.....

AMTRAK "MOUNTAIN VIEW" car 9362, a full-length dome lounge off the EMPIRE BUILDER, made a one-time roundtrip on the COAST STARLIGHT, leaving Seattle Nov 17, substituting for the regular lounge on the train--surely the first time the ex-GN car ran the Coast Route..... INFORMED SOURCES SAY that Amtrak President Alan Boyd is concerned about Amtrak advertising effectiveness and by the lack of advertising at the location of most Amtrak passenger stops. Some sources say Boyd was especially concerned after reading the RTN article about the Arkansas ARP's financing advertising at small towns on the INTER-AMERICAN route, with considerable resulting increases in business (see RTN #178). Insiders say Alan Boyd continues to tell his staff he will be "low profile" until he feels he has an adequate handle on the home office and Congressional-DOT problems that Amtrak is now facing. This means only a small chance that Boyd will go "on the road" to see what is going on in the near future, but more of a chance that inspection trips will be rewarding when he does travel..... AMTRAK IS CONSIDERING revisions to the present Chicago-Seattle schedules, but we have no details yet. The present eastbound schedules are poor for Washington State, and don't meet the northbound COAST STARLIGHT as of late October, the main reason for the poor times at Spokane. We've had complaints that Amtrak schedules the northern transcon runs so that times are good on the last 400 miles eastbound from Minneapolis to Chicago; yet both BUILDER and HIAWATHA runs miss the eastbound BROADWAY and LAKE SHORE runs...

RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR trainmen have reported that RGZ runs thru most of the 1978 summer season were quite full, often at or near the 300-passenger mark of a "full house" leaving Denver, which made for a 9-car train. Of this crowd, about 200 usually were for Glenwood Springs. Diner "Silver Banquet" returned to service Nov 16 after being in the shops. "Silver Shop" (with paper plate service) substituted for it. D&RGW "A" unit #5771 was in the shops for overhaul this summer..... A TELEVISION CREW rode the PIONEER from Boise to Baker late in November to film segments of a 30-minute feature on Amtrak..... WHEN BI-LEVEL SUPERLINER cars are assigned to the PIONEER, it will be two coaches, a diner-lounge combination, and a sleeper. The sleeper and one coach will go thru from Chicago via the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, ending sleeping-car service to Salt Lake City.....

* * *

SHORTAGE OF AMFLEET cars is severe after the ambitious Amfleeting program in 1978. Look for the MOUNT RAINIER, PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL and SAN JOAQUIN to "go conventional" from time to time. Four Amfleet cars were taken from the SAN JOAQUIN fleet and sent to Seattle to handle Seahawks football game traffic to and from the Seattle Kingdome. Readers report severe crowding on the SAN JOAQUIN on Thanksgiving weekend..... LAKE SHORE LIMITED made an unscheduled stop in Batavia NY at 5:10am on Dec 2, going eastbound, to let Kenneth Bird of NY NARP off after he found himself stranded in Chicago in a snowstorm. Amtrak made the first-time stop there at Mr. Bird's request. The train was only 80 minutes late, but the airlines couldn't deliver at all..... ELECTRIFIED CONVENTIONAL CARS will be used at times along with bi-level "Superliner" cars by means of ex-Santa Fe hi-level transition cars converted to electric power. The Santa Fe cars match up with the Superliners because the floor levels of both cars are identical, tho the Superliners are four inches higher due to more headroom..... THE DELAY OF the revived "LARK" West Coast overnight train is SP's insistence that Amtrak pay $23 million to double track the Coast Route between Chatsworth and Burbank, claiming that the added passenger train will interfere with switching movements.....

PRELIMINARY FALL STATISTICS show declines in patronage for the EMPIRE BUILDER, NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, PIONEER and SOUTHWEST LIMITED. High fares are said to be partially to blame. SFZ patronage is up a few percentage points.....

AN INTERESTING RUMOR we've heard lately is that Amtrak brass have at least in passing discussed the purchase of the Trailways bus system to help develop feeder capabilities for many Amtrak trains. If so, this is intermodal thinking at its best, and a good way to cut costs of operating many Amtrak stations.....

THANKSGIVING WEEK CHANGES: on Nov 26 train 391, the SHAWNEE, ran with 11 ex-C&NW bilevel coaches and one baggage car. Train 22, the INTER-AMERICAN left Chicago that same day with only four coaches and standing room only. Train 352, the SAINT CLAIR, ran in two sections; one section stopped at Ann Arbor and Detroit, and the second made all stops except Ann Arbor. A Turboliner ran as the first section of train 303, the STATE HOUSE as far as Bloomington and was turned there to run as the first section of train 304, the ANN RUTLEDGE. Turboliner 381 ran on its regular schedule to Champaign and ran as second section of train 392, the SHAWNEE, back to Chicago. Train 59, the PANAMA LIMITED, left Chicago with one sleeper and 14 Amfleet cars (896 seats), the last 6 of them running to Carbondale. The coaches were standing room only..... ENTERTAINER PEARL BAILEY was seen leaving Kansas City on Nov 26 on train 30, the NATIONAL LIMITED, in a suite of 2 rooms, bound for New York..... SANTA FE LOCOMOTIVE was apparently started up by vandals in Oklahoma City Nov 26 and ran 35 miles before it was purposely derailed in a yard northeast of Purcell OK. Unattended, the engine went thru two towns with no accidents. A police officer tried unsuccessfully to hop aboard and halt the driverless diesel..... SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 6, took the Western Pacific route thru Feather River Canyon on Nov 6 when it was blocked by a freight wreck east of Roseville CA. Passengers on no. 5 were bused from Roseville.....

LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 48, derailed 4 cars at 10mph just after leaving the Rensselaer NY station on Nov 29. There were no injuries. The accident occurred about 1pm, with the train running 3hrs late. Derailed were the 3 sleepers and the twin-unit diner, after the 3 E units and baggage car cleared the switch on the secondary track. The line was out of service until about 4:15pm, and trains 74, 448, and 68 were delayed. Ironically, the derailment (attributed to poor track) happened a matter of hours before the track was to be taken out of service. The one-track stretch is to be double-tracked, and the second track was completed that day and was to go into service Nov 30 while the old track is taken out of service and rebuilt as part of New York State's track-rebuilding program.....

WHILE AMTRAK RIDERSHIP was down this year, Thanksgiving weekend may have set a new record, with preliminary counts showing 15,504 standees systemwide, compared with 9,592 last year. Amtrak leased 68 Jersey Arrows to help in the Corridor..... News in this issue is updated thru Dec 10, 1978.

CARS & CONSISTS

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Kansas City Nov 15: engines 517, 518, 512; cars 1235, 1234, 9990, 9903, 9950, 9971, 9983, 9936, 2213 "Indian Flute", 2214 "Indian Lake", 2607 "Pacific Cove", dome 9201 "Starlight Dome", private car "La Marguerita de Oro II" (Mickey Mouse 50th Anniversary Special L.A.-Chicago-N.Y.).

*MONTREALER, train 60, Washington Nov 25: engine 960; cars bag-dorm 1454, slprs "Pacific Waters", "Joseph V. MacDonald", Amdinette 20206, lounge 20110, Amcoaches 21873, 21837, 21830, 21861, 21001.

*NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, train 18, St. Paul Nov 26: engines F40PHR's & steam cars nos. unknown; cars 2676 "Silver Ravine", 8094, 8153 "Whitefish Lake", 4862, dome 9466, 4818. Cars 2676 & 8094 went to train 7 at La Crosse; following cars set out at Billings to thaw out: 2678 "Silver Ridge", dome 9478, 4892, 1540.

*EMPIRE BUILDER, train 7, St. Paul Nov 27 (2:15am, 5:30 late): engines 246, 251 (F40PHR's), steam cars 676, 666; cars 2663 "Silver Slope", 2676 "Silver Ravine", 8094, dome 9331 "Silver Veranda", 5690, 4551, dome 9467, 4518, dome 9474, 1551, 1229, 1253. (BN requires reverse consists for winter on BUILDER and NCH.)

*ILLINOIS ZEPHYR, train 347, 1st section, Galesburg Nov 26: engine 534; cars 9919, 9903, 9958, 9961, 9905 (hi-levels), 3353, 5602. Second section: engines 293, 269 (F40PHR's); 12 Amfleet cars, nos. unknown.

*INTER-AMERICAN/"Hogtrain", train 21, Little Rock Nov 10 (fans to U of Ark-Baylor football game): engines 424 (E8), 236 (F40PHR); cars 1373, 2987, 20029, 21879, 21872, 21884, 20215, 21874, 21856.

RIDERSHIP (continued from page 5)

Government policies that reduced air fares sharply, mostly on long distance routes, and that kept the price of gasoline artificially low relative to world petroleum prices, caused the public to gravitate toward other modes of travel. Gasoline consumption was up 4.5% this year. And as we noted earlier, the Wall Street Journal found that people took more automobile vacations this year with a feeling that they wanted a "last fling" with their cars before gasoline prices increased.

Another big factor in lower Amtrak patronage was Amtrak's lower advertising budget this year--$8.5 million in fiscal 1978 compared with $10.5 million in 1977. (Estimates are that the airlines spent $150 million on advertising last year.) And there was also the big railroad strike from Sept 26 to 30, with some trains affected longer than that (the HILLTOPPER was out for over a month).

For fiscal year 1978 (Oct-Sep) long distance ridership was down 3.7% with the biggest drop being Chicago-Seattle (see note above). Short distance ridership was up 1.9%, mostly due to L.A.-San Diego increases, Northeast Corridor riders were down 1.5%, and the overall systemwide decrease was 1.5%.

EXPRESS ADS

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TIMETABLES - Public & Employee New list monthly. SSAE for latest list. Compendium of AMTRAK timetables, 50¢. CARL LOUCKS, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports from 30 railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. Will buy items.

CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO 1979 Calendar - steam and diesel, unfolds to 11x17". Thirteen excellent photos by Huddleston, Reid, and Collins, action and roster. $3.25 postpaid. C&O Historical Society, Inc., Dept. CF, 5725 Larpin Lane, Alexandria, VA 22310.

BUMPER STICKER "Railroaders detect hotboxes" $2.50. Zephyr Pyramid Enterprises, Box 5, El Segundo CA 90245 (Calif. residents add 6% tax).

NEWFOUNDLAND RAILWAY--LIFE OR DEATH? The Sullivan Commission has recommended abandonment for the 3'6"-gauge Newfoundland Railway. Most Newfoundlanders are opposed to this measure, and to catalyze this opposition, the Rising Tide Theatre will present a play portraying the railway's vital role. A $2000 deficit is foreseen. You can help. Donations welcome to: RAILWAY SHOW, 153 Hamilton Avenue, St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada, A1E 1J4.

TROLLEY NOSTALGIA: "Trolley Trails Through the West": Vol. 1 - Yakima, Vol. 2 - Seattle, Vol. 3 - Portland, Vol. 4 - Tacoma, Spokane, Bellingham, etc., Vol. 5 - Montana and Utah $3.00 each. Moneyback guarantee. Wilson Bros. Publications, Box 712RTN, Yakima, WA 98907.

Express, Railroad, Steamship, Traction and Trolley uniform buttons. Send $1.00 for list and sample. Joseph Lajoie, 22 Stevens St., Methuen, Mass. 01844.

RTN #180 REPORTED that the former D&H/ATSF ALCO PA diesels have headed south to the National Railways of Mexico. Northwest Rail Images hasn't photographed this yet, but we do offer a 25-slide set titled "Trains of Northern Mexico" that will show prospective visitors what to expect south of the border. Price: $6.25 incl. 1st class postage. Or send 35¢ for a sample slide and list of more than 20 sets including Amtrak, pre-Amtrak and non-Amtrak passenger subjects from Georgia RR's mixeds to the Northern Alberta Rly. to Newfoundland. Yes, we even have some non-passenger subjects. Northwest Rail Images, 4891 Donald Street, Eugene, OR 97405.

Please let me know of an individual or company that makes pins & bumper stickers. THANX. Keep on Trakin'. Merlin L. Marlowe, RR 2; Fairfax, MN 55332.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Jun 22-Jul 7, 1979: "Scandinavian Rails" tour of Denmark-Sweden-Finland-Norway incl. mainline steam on DS8; over Arctic Circle by rail; streetcars; Flam line, fjords, etc. Overland-NRHS, 320 Wisconsin, #511, Oak Park IL 60302.

Apr 7-28, 1979: South African Steam Safari; Rwy Soc of Southern Africa 10-day, 2140-mi steam excursion; & 2-ft gauge freight, Blue Train or Kruger Ntl Park. $1985. Phila. NRHS c/o Glen Roc Travel, 194 Scotch Rd, Trenton NJ 08628.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to: Rail Travel News, Fantrips Dept., PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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Railway Passenger Car Annual

At long last we have finished compiling Volume 4 of the RAILWAY PASSENGER CAR ANNUAL. Our printer has been co-operative and we have the book in stock ready for immediate mailing.

As in past issues this valuable compilation contains a listing in numerical order of all Railroad, Operating Authority, and Transit passenger cars in active service during 1978 showing prior owners, names and numbers, builder and year built.

Besides showing disposition of all cars retired in the past couple of years, we have a special feature in this volume showing the complete disposition of over 400 Amtrak cars sold since the energy crises in 1974.

Note: The amount of material to be included in the Private Owner and Museum section has become so great that this will have to be covered in a separate Volume from now on. You will be advised of this volume and the price as soon as we can schedule a publication date. Our goal is to have this out before Christmas 1978.

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BOOKS

Paul ("The Great Railway Bazaar") Theroux will have his latest rail journey book ready for readers next year. Entitled "The Old Patagonian Express", it will cover a 10,000-mile trip thru Latin America. The author left his home in Medford, MA (B&M) and traveled to Patagonia, at the very tip of South America. He recently commented that only Argentina has a rail system up to European standards and that trains are not used all that much in South America.

And for those interested in the Boston & Maine's involvement in commercial air travel, it is urged that they get a 1969 book, "Adventures of a Yellowbird", that is still available at the 1969 price of $7.50 from the author, Robert Mudge, 43 Country Club Road, Peabody, MA 01960. The book covers the B&M/MEC/CV airline involvement in great detail before continuing on with the history of the successor to the B&M operation, Northeast Airlines, carrying the story thru the 35th anniversary of the carrier, shortly before merger into Delta. An excellent look at an often unknown phase from New England railroad history. --Pete Roehm.

LETTERS

I am sorry that Mr. Mason (RTN #178) finds my letter (RTN #176) derogatory toward wage earners. I assume that he, as a reader of RTN, shares with me a desire to see the passenger train survive and prosper. I wish he had overcome his hurt feelings and spent more time telling how the railway workers and their unions can aid our cause. I feel I paid workers the ultimate compliment in suggesting that experiments be conducted with crews running trains from start to finish and being given much wider responsibility and decision-making power than they now enjoy. To address another point raised by Mr. Mason, crew members on these trains would work in shifts. There would be no danger of an engineer being asked to stay at the throttle for days at a time, as Mr. Mason implies that I suggest.

Whether or not this idea would work, I still feel that increased employee productivity is essential to the survival of passenger service. Sometimes poor management notwithstanding, labor costs are the largest component of passenger train operation. I have been on many trains where in the few hours between crew changes, conductors and trainmen slept or chatted after spending a half-hour collecting and counting tickets. Yet bathrooms and windows on some of these trains were filthy, lunch counters unmanned, etc. As the owner-operator of a small business, I find it difficult to understand a worker who can only perform one narrow function and refuses to pitch in if something outside his job category needs attention. While some of this division of labor made sense in a bygone era of thousands of well-patronized daily passenger trains, it creates an unbearable burden on the skeletal passenger services of today.

Passenger trains today operate in an increasingly hostile political climate of skepticism toward federal expenditures which seem wasteful. When our opponents read a news report concerning Amtrak (too often a derailment) and it comes out that there were 50 passengers and 12 crewmembers aboard (to be changed every few hours) this is not good for our cause.

I challenge Mr. Mason and others who work on the railroads to come up with some creative ideas on work rule reform, etc. Certainly you have more at stake in this than I do. I hope that in responding you will avoid narrow local situations and address yourself to wider issues and changes that you believe would help the passenger train survive.

I am afraid that if the spiraling costs of passenger operation cannot be brought down, most of us who enjoy riding long distance trains will find the choices limited to high-density corridors and occasional railfan-oriented excursions on longer runs.

Philip N. Klopp
Easton, Pennsylvania

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ON THE COVER

A small citizen of Glenwood Springs, Colorado trudges home from school thru eight inches of new snow on Tuesday, Dec 20, 1977 just east of the Denver and Rio Grande Western rail station, while at his left D&RGW train 18, the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, prepares to depart for Denver. In the left background is the western entrance to the famous Glenwood Canyon, threatened by major Interstate freeway construction. Also threatened is a major portion of the domeliner's route, between Salt Lake City and Grand Junction, as the railroad has applied for permission to drop that portion effective Jan 31, 1979 (see news item last issue). In this issue we present more information and comment on the topic of this proposed abandonment. Photo from Kodachrome transparency by Glenn Lee.

WHITE HOUSE BUDGET PROPOSAL WOULD KILL AMTRAK NATIONAL SYSTEM

The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on Dec 4 released its proposal for the Amtrak operating subsidy for fiscal year 1980 (which begins in Oct 1979). The amount proposed by OMB head James McIntyre is $456 million. This figure is $100 million lower than the amount for Amtrak requested by the Department of Transportation, which hopes to eliminate a number of Amtrak routes. Amtrak's own request is for $665 million, the amount Amtrak says it needs in order to continue the present system in FY 1980 (in the present fiscal year $600 million was budgeted). Thus the OMB is expecting a 31.4% cut in Amtrak's operating funds from the amount Amtrak says it needs in order to maintain a system like the present one. In addition, OMB expects that Amtrak must pay labor protection costs for workers laid off in a route cutback, from its operating budget, reducing it still more. The DOT had assumed that labor protection payments would be funded separately. It is estimated that if the OMB figure were to prevail--if President Carter or Congress do not reverse it--Amtrak would be reduced to a system like Scenario B in the May 1978 DOT proposal, or corridors only and perhaps a few long distance routes. DOT Secretary Adams was to meet with McIntyre on Dec 6 to attempt to persuade him to restore the DOT's budget request.

SOUTHERN CRESCENT IN DERAILMENT DISASTER

In the worst U.S. passenger train disaster since the derailment of the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS in 1971, the northbound SOUTHERN CRESCENT, Southern Railway train 2, derailed at 5:40am on Sunday, Dec 3 near Elma VA in a rural area about halfway between Charlottesville and Lynchburg. Preliminary investigations by federal safety officials found that the train may have been speeding at 80mph on a 45mph speed limit curve. Engineer J. D. Smith of Alexandria told investigators that he had been preoccupied with a mechanical failure--an electric short circuit that was causing a loss of power. There were 65 passengers and 12 crew aboard the train, and six people were killed and at least 60 injured. Two of the dead were identified as crewmen--flagman Howard L. Jackson of Alexandria, and Lewis Price of Atlanta. Price was the chef who has been featured in recent SR advertisments that described his home-style cooking. About 62 passengers were treated at hospitals, and two days after the crash 18 remained hospitalized, with 5 in critical condition. The 8-car train was pulled by 4 locomotives. The first locomotive did not derail, but the rest of the train did, except for the last car, apparently a dorm car. Some of the cars and engines went over a 40-foot embankment to the left. The first 4 cars were most heavily damaged, with the diner and sleeper-lounge being virtually demolished. The diner fell on top of the fourth locomotive down the embankment. RTN reader Ben Cornelius, an Amtrak employee, was riding the train and assisted the injured. Some of the injuries were evidently caused by broken glass windows. The train was running from Atlanta to Washington, apparently carrying no thru Amtrak cars that day. The CITY OF NEW ORLEANS derailment in 1971 killed 12, and 45 died in a collision of two Chicago commuter trains in 1972.

AMTRAK READY TO TAKE OVER SOUTHERN CRESCENT

At the Amtrak Board meeting on Dec 13 corporation directors will be asked to approve an agreement with Southern Railway to join Amtrak and allow the Amtrak takeover of the Washington-Atlanta-New Orleans SOUTHERN CRESCENT. The railway recently petitioned the ICC to drop the train, but it was ordered to continue running. It is believed that the agreement, which is expected to be approved, calls for a Feb 1 takeover, with the train being run daily between New York and New Orleans. The entire train including diner would run from New York to Atlanta, with some cars being cut off there. It is believed that an Amtrak crewbase for SR employees will be opened in Atlanta. Amtrak directors rejected two previous proposed agreements with SR, and the present one is reportedly more favorable to Amtrak. Details of the agreement will not be available until after Dec 13.

ROCK ISLAND TRAINS GIVEN EXTENSION

The Interstate Commerce Commission has granted an extension until mid-February for the Rock Island's passenger runs, at the urging of rail unions. Meanwhile, the Illinois DOT will cease its subsidy of the service on Dec 30, indicating that it has reached an agreement in principle with Amtrak to take over the Chicago-Peoria runs. Previously the ICC was allowing the trains to be discontinued on Nov 18 or 19.

GASOLINE SHORTAGE RUMORS SCARE NATION

Pointing up the nation's underlying jitteriness about possible fuel shortages, a combination of political unrest in Iran, Shell Oil's announcement that its shortage of unleaded gasoline would require rationing to dealers, the OPEC's coming price rise of probably 5-10% for petroleum, and President Carter's statement that he would seek to deregulate gasoline prices in mid-January, combined to create a nationwide air of concern about gasoline usage this month.

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

	JUL	AUG	SEP
Metroliners	126,970	138,394	140,580
N.E. Corr. Conventional	408,097	421,910	382,302
New Haven-Springfield	23,035	23,729	22,143
NY-Philadelphia	184,097	197,485	187,559
Phila-Harrisburg	72,155	77,529	73,520
NY-Harrisburg	16,630	18,316	15,606
NY-Buffalo/Detroit	51,151	54,423	43,058
Chicago-St. Louis	15,772	16,736	11,236
Chicago-Milwaukee	24,773	26,642	19,020
Chicago-Detroit	36,509	38,766	28,519
Chicago-Carbondale	11,565	11,610	10,187
Chicago-Quincy	6,935	6,958	5,943
Los Angeles-San Diego	83,000	97,763	56,857
Seattle-Portland	8,853	10,819	7,128
Seattle-Vancouver	7,829	9,880	5,020
Washington-Cincinnati	6,812	6,821	3,817
Washington-Martinsburg	21,108	22,007	16,173
Oakland-Bakersfield	7,858	8,240	4,224
NY-Montreal	11,708	12,166	8,390
Chicago-Port Huron	8,424	9,494	6,169
Chicago-Dubuque	5,388	6,361	2,808
St. Paul-Duluth	9,677	11,663	5,297
Washington-Montreal	33,988	33,914	26,107
NY-Florida	81,301	83,264	39,446
Chicago-NY/Washington	24,791	26,382	15,752
Chicago-Cincinnati-Wash	13,048	13,142	6,503
Kansas City-NY/Washington	20,449	23,088	11,019
Chicago-Seattle (north)	20,398	24,378	11,659
Chicago-Seattle (south)	21,965	23,746	12,284
Chicago-San Francisco	26,054	28,220	15,521
Chicago-Los Angeles	30,445	31,235	16,677
Chicago-Houston	24,706	23,650	12,177
Chicago-New Orleans	21,262	21,971	13,781
Chicago-Florida	13,650	13,281	5,995
Chicago-Laredo	15,134	16,011	6,597
Los Angeles-New Orleans	10,290	9,973	5,349
Los Angeles-Seattle	46,659	55,181	32,665
Chicago-NY/Boston	26,931	30,492	21,007
Boston-Newport News	53,657	54,322	44,692
NY-Savannah	44,069	40,944	30,491
Seattle-Salt Lake City	13,054	14,350	8,388
Boston-Tri-State	3,349	1,596	1,195
Special Trains	12	0	0

Previous Amtrak ridership figures appeared in issue #178. An Amtrak spokesman said that 1978 has been a "dismal" year for ridership. There are many reasons for this, and none of them suggests that the public doesn't want trains. One of the biggest factors is all the adverse publicity associated with the DOT announcement in May that it wants to reduce the Amtrak system. This amounts to telling the public not to ride trains. For example, even a newsman with a large Ohio newspaper was puzzled by a recent Amtrak notice that the LAKE SHORE LIMITED would have a schedule change; he thought the train had already been discontinued (and it wasn't even one of the proposed cutback routes in the DOT plan!). Another factor is Amtrak's own cutback of service: in summer 1977 there were two Chicago-Seattle daily trains, while in summer 1978 there was only one train daily (running different routes on alternate days). Consists have been regularly reduced, resulting in capacity lower than needs. The Chicago-Denver run had 18 cars in summer of 1974, 16 in 1976, 14 and sometimes 15 in 1978. But in each of those years riders were turned away at peak periods. Cutting train size automatically cuts ridership. Why were consists reduced? Amtrak says it was done because some cars were diverted to new routes, some cars were scrapped, and fewer commuter cars were available to lease in the East due to older ones being scrapped.
(Continued on page 20)

Systemwide ridership totals: Jul: 1,725,058; Aug: 1,759,852; Sep: 1,424,861

RAIL CANADA

ESQUIMALT AND NANAIMO passenger service has been saved. Service on the CP Rail subsidiary between Victoria and Courtenay, B.C. will continue for a 5-year period, according to a Canadian Transport Commission ruling issued after mid-November hearings. CP can apply for discontinuance again in 5 years, but VIA actually should take the train over and the 5-year period becomes academic. During public hearings in Victoria, VIA Chairman J. Frank Roberts said that he'd like to see the service continued to see if it could become part of VIA's national network. This statement was totally unexpected, and CP then announced that in view of VIA's attitude CP was withdrawing from the case. The CTC then put its own experts on the stand. The CTC figures showed that no passenger train in Canada makes money, but the E&N lost less, with a ratio of costs over revenue of 2.7. (In comparison, Ottawa-Montreal had a 3.8 ratio, and Calgary-Edmonton posted 5.0. Last year the E&N ratio was 9.3 and the year before it was 11.2.)

DESPITE THE TAKEOVER of CP Rail's CANADIAN service by VIA, we find CP Air in mid-November still advertising a "Banff Ski Train Vacation" package with rail travel on the CANADIAN from Vancouver to Banff and 6 nights at the Banff Springs Hotel (see ad artwork at left).

VIA WILL EMPHASIZE, evidently, the CANADIAN Vancouver-Toronto transcon runs, with the CANADIAN now up to 12 cars and the SUPER CONTINENTAL down to about nine. The failure of VIA to operate thru cars from one route to the other at Winnipeg should discourage coach patronage, and sleeper capacity is down, which should also adversely affect patronage. Passengers from Thunder Bay to Ottawa and Montreal, who enjoyed thru-car service on the CANADIAN, must now endure a charter bus 20 miles from Sudbury to Capreol to complete their journeys. Passenger proponents say the present "fallback" situation is better than losing the SUPER CONTINENTAL between Winnipeg and Capreol/Sudbury, but clearly the change will not help stimulate passenger traffic.

BRITISH COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT has finally released the report of the McKenzie Royal Commission, which was studying the financial plight of the provincially-owned B.C. Railway. Major recommendations of the report include:

1) Try to sell the BCR to CN; if that can't be done, make it a truly autonomous crown corporation with no political influence on the Board of Directors.
2) Abandon the Dease Lake and Dawson Creek lines.
3) Discontinue passenger service, LCL, and piggyback.
4) If BCR's fortunes don't improve, abandon everything south of Williams Lake, all the way to North Vancouver.

The Provincial Government is under no obligation to implement any part of the report.

REGINA-SASKATOON-PRINCE ALBERT Railiner service no longer makes connections for Edmonton, due to VIA's rescheduling. Transport 2000 is concerned with this problem, as it may lead to discontinuance of the service; the SUPER CONTINENTAL was the main source of passenger traffic for the railiner. Transport 2000 plans this winter to devote efforts to preparing a report on this for the CTC.

CP RAIL HAS ANNOUNCED schedules for "Princess Patricia's" 1979 season of Alaska cruising. There will be 18 sailings from Vancouver May 15-Sep 28 inclusive. Departure times and ports of call duplicate those of the 1978 season, which was to have been the last until CP's change of plans.

CP'S STAINLESS CANADIAN cars went to VIA for about $60,000 each, rather than the railroad's asking price of $250,000 each.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

MASS TRANSIT USERS in Massachusetts will get 10% discounts on their car insurance if they have transit passes for at least 11 months of 1979. The plan by the Massachusetts Insurance Commission was pushed by the MBTA, transit authority in the Boston area. The MBTA said that transit riders have been "unwittingly subsidizing" the insurance payments of automobile commuters.

A RAIL SUBWAY to link San Francisco and Oakland airports has been proposed by by Robert Batinovich, president of the California Public Utilities Commission. Altho the transbay line would cost at least $1 billion to build, it would be cheaper than a new airport, soon to be needed due to air traffic growth. The Oakland airport is under-utilized and the S.F. airport over-used, and the rail line, joining BART's Coliseum station, would effectively make the two a single airport.

TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY ADAMS on Nov 9 proposed the establishment of a new Surface Transportation Administration by consolidating the existing Federal Highway and Urban Mass Transportation Administrations into a single agency.

THE ORANGE LINE of Washington DC's Metro system, which opened Nov 20, is getting "rave reviews", according to Washington newspapers. Bus routes to coordinate with the new transit line did not shift until Dec 4, but even before that, patronage was reported high. The new Metrorail line runs to Northeast Washington and Prince George's County. One Maryland-subsidized commuter train stops at Landover and Cheverly, now served by Metro. If Metro patronage pulls commuters from the train, it will eliminate the two stops, thus speeding up its schedule by 5 minutes. The new 7.5-mile line runs on elevated tracks to New Carrollton station, served by a low-fee parking lot.

HARSH WINTER PLANS have been made by transportation agencies in the East after two severe winters and another forecast to come. The Long Island Rail Road, criticized for its winter-induced breakdowns last year, is taking steps to keep in operation. Its new president, Francis Gabreski, has received new jet-powered snow blowers, and the railroad has even hired a meteorological consultant to assist it.

BOSTON WILL RETURN 35 of its new Boeing-Vertol light rail vehicles to the manufacturer for repair, the MBTA announced Dec 6. San Francisco now has 5 of the streetcars for preliminary tests, with its full order of 100 scheduled by August. The San Francisco cars, four years behind schedule, are "Modification Three" models which have profited from Boston's tests with the early design.

SAN DIEGO EXPECTS to sign a contract early in 1979 to purchase the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway from SP. A streetcar line from downtown to San Ysidro at the Mexican border is expected to be running by early 1982, and freight runs are planned between San Diego and El Cajon.

THE BUDD COMPANY bid a lower-than-expected price for 300 transit cars for the Chicago Transit Authority in mid-November.

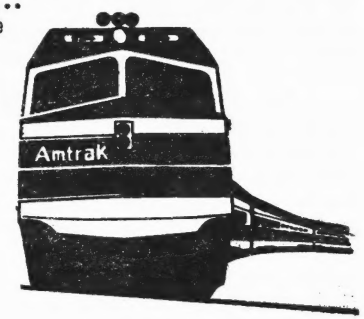
QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"At 35,000 feet, those purple mountains lose a lot of their majesty. That high up, you don't see America. You see the clouds that cover America. Travel Amtrak, though, and we'll give you down-to-earth travel at down-to-earth prices."
--From current Amtrak newspaper ad.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"The Rohn Corporation of California produced the BART system of the San Francisco Bay Area and the new subway in Washington, D.C."
--Seymour Melman in New York Times Magazine, Nov 19.
(That's wishful thinking.)

"SELF-INFLICTED SETBACKS to President Carter's efforts to halt inflation and conserve energy will result" said the National Association of RR Passengers in a Dec 6 announcement, if the Carter Administration's efforts to drastically cut back rail passenger service succeed. NARP President Orren Beaty, in communications to OMB Director McIntyre and Secretary of Transportation Adams, said that the OMB-planned cuts (see news item, page 3) for fiscal year 1980 would force Amtrak to stop serving several important corridor markets and virtaully all long-distance routes. Beaty pointed out that rail and bus alternatives to wasteful auto and air travel must be improved and expanded to reduce inflation-causing oil imports and the need for costly new highway construction. He urged development of new rail-bus terminals and said that a rail-and-bus network would be far more effective in getting people out of their cars than would a bus-only system. He pointed out that the cuts would disrupt the Amtrak route planning process and force discontinuance of trains in the face of overwhelmingly pro-service testimony given at ICC hearings this past summer.....



RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE is a great advantage for suburban dwellers and a strong selling point for real estate served by rail lines, as witness ads by a Fullerton CA real estate developer who prints the current SAN DIEGAN schedule in his ads, which are headed "Live in the country, commute to L.A. on Amtrak." The little Amtrak train shown here appears in the ads in Southern California papers...

FIRST TWO F40 engines received by Boston's MBTA have been named for two well-known rail transportation figures. Engines 1000 and 1001 were so dedicated on Nov 21. Engine 1000 was named for Henry Hersey, a dedicated rail passenger advocate who is Chairman of the Board of Selectmen for the town of Needham. Engine 1001 was named for James McGrath, recently deceased, an employee of the B&A and successor lines since 1939, and passenger conductor since 1953 on the Framingham line where he was very popular among passengers. The MBTA's first new Pullman-built coach, #301, which arrived early in November, was also featured in the ceremony which included Governor Dukakis.....

AMTRAK "MOUNTAIN VIEW" car 9362, a full-length dome lounge off the EMPIRE BUILDER, made a one-time roundtrip on the COAST STARLIGHT, leaving Seattle Nov 17, substituting for the regular lounge on the train--surely the first time the ex-GN car ran the Coast Route..... INFORMED SOURCES SAY that Amtrak President Alan Boyd is concerned about Amtrak advertising effectiveness and by the lack of advertising at the location of most Amtrak passenger stops. Some sources say Boyd was especially concerned after reading the RTN article about the Arkansas ARP's financing advertising at small towns on the INTER-AMERICAN route, with considerable resulting increases in business (see RTN #178). Insiders say Alan Boyd continues to tell his staff he will be "low profile" until he feels he has an adequate handle on the home office and Congressional-DOT problems that Amtrak is now facing. This means only a small chance that Boyd will go "on the road" to see what is going on in the near future, but more of a chance that inspection trips will be rewarding when he does travel..... AMTRAK IS CONSIDERING revisions to the present Chicago-Seattle schedules, but we have no details yet. The present eastbound schedules are poor for Washington State, and don't meet the northbound COAST STARLIGHT as of late October, the main reason for the poor times at Spokane. We've had complaints that Amtrak schedules the northern transcon runs so that times are good on the last 400 miles eastbound from Minneapolis to Chicago; yet both BUILDER and HIAWATHA runs miss the eastbound BROADWAY and LAKE SHORE runs...

RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR trainmen have reported that RGZ runs thru most of the 1978 summer season were quite full, often at or near the 300-passenger mark of a "full house" leaving Denver, which made for a 9-car train. Of this crowd, about 200 usually were for Glenwood Springs. Diner "Silver Banquet" returned to service Nov 16 after being in the shops. "Silver Shop" (with paper plate service) substituted for it. D&RGW "A" unit #5771 was in the shops for overhaul this summer..... A TELEVISION CREW rode the PIONEER from Boise to Baker late in November to film segments of a 30-minute feature on Amtrak..... WHEN BI-LEVEL SUPERLINER cars are assigned to the PIONEER, it will be two coaches, a diner-lounge combination, and a sleeper. The sleeper and one coach will go thru from Chicago via the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, ending sleeping-car service to Salt Lake City.....

* * *

SHORTAGE OF AMFLEET cars is severe after the ambitious Amfleeting program in 1978. Look for the MOUNT RAINIER, PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL and SAN JOAQUIN to "go conventional" from time to time. Four Amfleet cars were taken from the SAN JOAQUIN fleet and sent to Seattle to handle Seahawks football game traffic to and from the Seattle Kingdome. Readers report severe crowding on the SAN JOAQUIN on Thanksgiving weekend..... LAKE SHORE LIMITED made an unscheduled stop in Batavia NY at 5:10am on Dec 2, going eastbound, to let Kenneth Bird of NY NARP off after he found himself stranded in Chicago in a snowstorm. Amtrak made the first-time stop there at Mr. Bird's request. The train was only 80 minutes late, but the airlines couldn't deliver at all..... ELECTRIFIED CONVENTIONAL CARS will be used at times along with bi-level "Superliner" cars by means of ex-Santa Fe hi-level transition cars converted to electric power. The Santa Fe cars match up with the Superliners because the floor levels of both cars are identical, tho the Superliners are four inches higher due to more headroom..... THE DELAY OF the revived "LARK" West Coast overnight train is SP's insistence that Amtrak pay $23 million to double track the Coast Route between Chatsworth and Burbank, claiming that the added passenger train will interfere with switching movements.....

PRELIMINARY FALL STATISTICS show declines in patronage for the EMPIRE BUILDER, NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, PIONEER and SOUTHWEST LIMITED. High fares are said to be partially to blame. SFZ patronage is up a few percentage points.....

AN INTERESTING RUMOR we've heard lately is that Amtrak brass have at least in passing discussed the purchase of the Trailways bus system to help develop feeder capabilities for many Amtrak trains. If so, this is intermodal thinking at its best, and a good way to cut costs of operating many Amtrak stations.....

THANKSGIVING WEEK CHANGES: on Nov 26 train 391, the SHAWNEE, ran with 11 ex-C&NW bilevel coaches and one baggage car. Train 22, the INTER-AMERICAN left Chicago that same day with only four coaches and standing room only. Train 352, the SAINT CLAIR, ran in two sections; one section stopped at Ann Arbor and Detroit, and the second made all stops except Ann Arbor. A Turboliner ran as the first section of train 303, the STATE HOUSE as far as Bloomington and was turned there to run as the first section of train 304, the ANN RUTLEDGE. Turboliner 381 ran on its regular schedule to Champaign and ran as second section of train 392, the SHAWNEE, back to Chicago. Train 59, the PANAMA LIMITED, left Chicago with one sleeper and 14 Amfleet cars (896 seats), the last 6 of them running to Carbondale. The coaches were standing room only..... ENTERTAINER PEARL BAILEY was seen leaving Kansas City on Nov 26 on train 30, the NATIONAL LIMITED, in a suite of 2 rooms, bound for New York..... SANTA FE LOCOMOTIVE was apparently started up by vandals in Oklahoma City Nov 26 and ran 35 miles before it was purposely derailed in a yard northeast of Purcell OK. Unattended, the engine went thru two towns with no accidents. A police officer tried unsuccessfully to hop aboard and halt the driverless diesel..... SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 6, took the Western Pacific route thru Feather River Canyon on Nov 6 when it was blocked by a freight wreck east of Roseville CA. Passengers on no. 5 were bused from Roseville.....

LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 48, derailed 4 cars at 10mph just after leaving the Rensselaer NY station on Nov 29. There were no injuries. The accident occurred about 1pm, with the train running 3hrs late. Derailed were the 3 sleepers and the twin-unit diner, after the 3 E units and baggage car cleared the switch on the secondary track. The line was out of service until about 4:15pm, and trains 74, 448, and 68 were delayed. Ironically, the derailment (attributed to poor track) happened a matter of hours before the track was to be taken out of service. The one-track stretch is to be double-tracked, and the second track was completed that day and was to go into service Nov 30 while the old track is taken out of service and rebuilt as part of New York State's track-rebuilding program.....

WHILE AMTRAK RIDERSHIP was down this year, Thanksgiving weekend may have set a new record, with preliminary counts showing 15,504 standees systemwide, compared with 9,592 last year. Amtrak leased 68 Jersey Arrows to help in the Corridor..... News in this issue is updated thru Dec 10, 1978.

CARS & CONSISTS

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Kansas City Nov 15: engines 517, 518, 512; cars 1235, 1234, 9990, 9903, 9950, 9971, 9983, 9936, 2213 "Indian Flute", 2214 "Indian Lake", 2607 "Pacific Cove", dome 9201 "Starlight Dome", private car "La Marguerita de Oro II" (Mickey Mouse 50th Anniversary Special L.A.-Chicago-N.Y.).

*MONTREALER, train 60, Washington Nov 25: engine 960; cars bag-dorm 1454, slprs "Pacific Waters", "Joseph V. MacDonald", Amdinette 20206, lounge 20110, Amcoaches 21873, 21837, 21830, 21861, 21001.

*NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, train 18, St. Paul Nov 26: engines F40PHR's & steam cars nos. unknown; cars 2676 "Silver Ravine", 8094, 8153 "Whitefish Lake", 4862, dome 9466, 4818. Cars 2676 & 8094 went to train 7 at La Crosse; following cars set out at Billings to thaw out: 2678 "Silver Ridge", dome 9478, 4892, 1540.

*EMPIRE BUILDER, train 7, St. Paul Nov 27 (2:15am, 5:30 late): engines 246, 251 (F40PHR's), steam cars 676, 666; cars 2663 "Silver Slope", 2676 "Silver Ravine", 8094, dome 9331 "Silver Veranda", 5690, 4551, dome 9467, 4518, dome 9474, 1551, 1229, 1253. (BN requires reverse consists for winter on BUILDER and NCH.)

*ILLINOIS ZEPHYR, train 347, 1st section, Galesburg Nov 26: engine 534; cars 9919, 9903, 9958, 9961, 9905 (hi-levels), 3353, 5602. Second section: engines 293, 269 (F40PHR's); 12 Amfleet cars, nos. unknown.

*INTER-AMERICAN/"Hogtrain", train 21, Little Rock Nov 10 (fans to U of Ark-Baylor football game): engines 424 (E8), 236 (F40PHR); cars 1373, 2987, 20029, 21879, 21872, 21884, 20215, 21874, 21856.

RIDERSHIP (continued from page 5)

Government policies that reduced air fares sharply, mostly on long distance routes, and that kept the price of gasoline artificially low relative to world petroleum prices, caused the public to gravitate toward other modes of travel. Gasoline consumption was up 4.5% this year. And as we noted earlier, the Wall Street Journal found that people took more automobile vacations this year with a feeling that they wanted a "last fling" with their cars before gasoline prices increased.

Another big factor in lower Amtrak patronage was Amtrak's lower advertising budget this year--$8.5 million in fiscal 1978 compared with $10.5 million in 1977. (Estimates are that the airlines spent $150 million on advertising last year.) And there was also the big railroad strike from Sept 26 to 30, with some trains affected longer than that (the HILLTOPPER was out for over a month).

For fiscal year 1978 (Oct-Sep) long distance ridership was down 3.7% with the biggest drop being Chicago-Seattle (see note above). Short distance ridership was up 1.9%, mostly due to L.A.-San Diego increases, Northeast Corridor riders were down 1.5%, and the overall systemwide decrease was 1.5%.

EXPRESS ADS

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TIMETABLES - Public & Employee New list monthly. SSAE for latest list. Compendium of AMTRAK timetables, 50¢. CARL LOUCKS, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports from 30 railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. Will buy items.

CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO 1979 Calendar - steam and diesel, unfolds to 11x17". Thirteen excellent photos by Huddleston, Reid, and Collins, action and roster. $3.25 postpaid. C&O Historical Society, Inc., Dept. CF, 5725 Larpin Lane, Alexandria, VA 22310.

BUMPER STICKER "Railroaders detect hotboxes" $2.50. Zephyr Pyramid Enterprises, Box 5, El Segundo CA 90245 (Calif. residents add 6% tax).

NEWFOUNDLAND RAILWAY--LIFE OR DEATH? The Sullivan Commission has recommended abandonment for the 3'6"-gauge Newfoundland Railway. Most Newfoundlanders are opposed to this measure, and to catalyze this opposition, the Rising Tide Theatre will present a play portraying the railway's vital role. A $2000 deficit is foreseen. You can help. Donations welcome to: RAILWAY SHOW, 153 Hamilton Avenue, St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada, A1E 1J4.

TROLLEY NOSTALGIA: "Trolley Trails Through the West": Vol. 1 - Yakima, Vol. 2 - Seattle, Vol. 3 - Portland, Vol. 4 - Tacoma, Spokane, Bellingham, etc., Vol. 5 - Montana and Utah $3.00 each. Moneyback guarantee. Wilson Bros. Publications, Box 712RTN, Yakima, WA 98907.

Express, Railroad, Steamship, Traction and Trolley uniform buttons. Send $1.00 for list and sample. Joseph Lajoie, 22 Stevens St., Methuen, Mass. 01844.

RTN #180 REPORTED that the former D&H/ATSF ALCO PA diesels have headed south to the National Railways of Mexico. Northwest Rail Images hasn't photographed this yet, but we do offer a 25-slide set titled "Trains of Northern Mexico" that will show prospective visitors what to expect south of the border. Price: $6.25 incl. 1st class postage. Or send 35¢ for a sample slide and list of more than 20 sets including Amtrak, pre-Amtrak and non-Amtrak passenger subjects from Georgia RR's mixeds to the Northern Alberta Rly. to Newfoundland. Yes, we even have some non-passenger subjects. Northwest Rail Images, 4891 Donald Street, Eugene, OR 97405.

Please let me know of an individual or company that makes pins & bumper stickers. THANX. Keep on Trakin'. Merlin L. Marlowe, RR 2; Fairfax, MN 55332.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Jun 22-Jul 7, 1979: "Scandinavian Rails" tour of Denmark-Sweden-Finland-Norway incl. mainline steam on DSB; over Arctic Circle by rail; streetcars; Flam line, fjords, etc. Overland-NRHS, 320 Wisconsin, #511, Oak Park IL 60302.

Apr 7-28, 1979: South African Steam Safari; Rwy Soc of Southern Africa 10-day, 2140-mi steam excursion; & 2-ft gauge freight, Blue Train or Kruger Ntl Park. $1985. Phila. NRHS c/o Glen Roc Travel, 194 Scotch Rd, Trenton NJ 08628.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to: Rail Travel News, Fantrips Dept., PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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Railway Passenger Car Annual

At long last we have finished compiling Volume 4 of the RAILWAY PASSENGER CAR ANNUAL. Our printer has been co-operative and we have the book in stock ready for immediate mailing.

As in past issues this valuable compilation contains a listing in numerical order of all Railroad, Operating Authority, and Transit passenger cars in active service during 1978 showing prior owners, names and numbers, builder and year built.

Besides showing disposition of all cars retired in the past couple of years, we have a special feature in this volume showing the complete disposition of over 400 Amtrak cars sold since the energy crises in 1974.

Note: The amount of material to be included in the Private Owner and Museum section has become so great that this will have to be covered in a separate Volume from now on. You will be advised of this volume and the price as soon as we can schedule a publication date. Our goal is to have this out before Christmas 1978.

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